TWO

ELEGIES.

I. The BEE.

II. The BULFINCH.

Let not the Cenſor's ear diſdain
Theſe leſſons of humanity,
Tho' chaunted by the feather'd train,
Or nature's inſect progeny.

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TWO

FABLES

I. The BEE.

II. The BULFINCH.

LONDON.

THE BEE, AN ELEGY.

'TWAS Autumn; and the ſun's declining ray,
With larger orb now gilding o'er the weſt,
To weary nature told the parting day,
And taught betimes to take her uſual reſt.

Meliſſa firſt obſerv'd the length'ning ſhade,
Perceiv'd the nightly dews, and chilling blaſt,
All as ſhe fed along the ſilent glade,
Whilſt by her mates the time unnotic'd paſt.

Fain would ſhe now retard the parting day;
But all the ſky was mark'd with purple ſtreaks;
Fain have delay'd to wing her weary way;
And thus her dear companions ſhe beſpeaks.

In vain, ye buſy partners of my toil,
In vain ye ſtrive to lengthen out the day;
In vain our labours would the time beguile;
Come, let us homeward, homeward bend our way.

What tho' no more we ſip the pearly dew
From off the crocus, or the columbine;
What tho' no more we ſip the violet blue,
Or ſuck the fragrance rich of eglantine?

Yet have we ſtores collected of the dew,
From off the crocus, and the columbine;
Ours is the eſſence of the violet blue,
And all the rich perfumes of eglantine.

What tho' the rain deſcend, tho' tempeſts blow,
And winter haſte, with all his dreary train;
Yet not the ſtorm or tempeſt, rain or ſnow,
Can blaſt our bliſs, or work us fearful pain.

Mean

Mean time the Drones ſhall boaſt no ſtolen ſpoils;
Our cells immur'd ſhall all their art defy:
To ſhare our riches, let them ſhare our toils,
Or want the meed that's due to induſtry.

Then bid farewell to all thoſe bleſt retreats,
Where oft ye've rov'd, thro' many a ſummer's day;
And from each flow'r have ſip'd the luſcious ſweets;
A debt at leaſt 'twere gratitude to pay.

Tell them, when ſpring leads on the blooming May,
And Phœbus' kindlieſt influence warms the air,
With wonted freedom thro' thoſe haunts we'll ſtray,
And cull their riches with our uſual care.

She ſaid; on high then wing'd her weary flight;
With equal pace the little crew attend;
And ere the heav'ns were veil'd with gloomy night,
Their burden'd feet upon the hive deſcend.

A joyful clamor thro' their ſtate aroſe;
With pleaſure all their golden thighs ſurvey;
Where beſt to place, or how their wealth diſpoſe,
Diſſolv'd in ſleep, they leave till break of day.

Muſt then the Muſe purſue her mournful plan,
And ſorrowing tell Meliſſa's hapleſs woe?
Whilſt the ſad ſtory but diſgraces Man,
Who ſeem'd her friend, and prov'd her bitter'ſt.

When all was huſh'd, and not one watch awake,
The cruel wretch his horrid act decreed;
By quick alarm their choiceſt wealth to take,
And not content with that, to kill their breed.

One, only one, the general ſlaughter fled:
Wild indignation fir'd her little breaſt,
And generous pity for the thouſands dead:
When thus her heart-felt paſſion ſhe expreſt.

O than the purblind grub more cruel ſtill,
Or than the furious Waſp, or lazy Drone,
Who thus unpitying couldſt ſuch numbers kill,
And meanly pant for riches not thine own.

Perhaps, ere long, ſome murd'rer vile by ſtealth
Shall from thee ſleeping ſnatch thy helpleſs wife,
Strangle thy infants, and deſtroy thy wealth,
And yet more cruel, ſpare thy wretched life.

E'en

E'en then, more ſhock'd at that diſtreſſing ſight,
Thou ſhalt not feel ſeverer pains than I;
Save when thy mind recalls this impious night,
Deep ſhame, with ſorrow mixt, ſhall force a ſigh.

In vain we labor'd many a tedious day,
With niceſt care intent, to cull each flow'r;
In vain we bore hot Sirius' parching ray,
Alas! not dreaming of this fatal hour.

In vain our leſſons taught our early brood
To live abſtemious 'midſt abounding fare,
And with great pains collect the precious food,
Ere frozen Winter chill th' inclement air.

Was it for this you took our cluſt'ring ſwarm,
And fed us helpleſs in our ſtraw-built dome?
Was it for this you ſcreen'd off ev'ry harm,
And daily brought our little vagrants home?

Oft when I've ſeen thee force a gentle ſmile,
And ſmooth thy brow, tho' furrow'd deep with pain,
I thought we pleas'd thee with our artful toil,
Nor knew how treach'rous was thy love of gain.

But think not unreveng'd such guilt shall lie;
To work thee woe be hence my only pride,
She said; and settling on the murd'rers eye,
Deep she infix'd her painful sting, and dy'd.

THE

THE BULFINCH, AN ELEGY.

NERISSA ſaw her fav'rite Bird;
His poſture look'd deſpair;
His artleſs voice no more was heard
To emulate the Fair:

His wings were hung, his drooping head
Was neſtled in his breaſt;
His ruffled feathers, looſely ſpread,
His anguiſh well expreſt.

She blam'd the Servants groſs neglect,
Whilſt tears o'erſpread her eyes;
Nor did th' unconſcious Fair ſuſpect,
What gave his ſorrows riſe.

Trembling ſhe took her tuneful lyre,
Explor'd each tender ſtring,
Mock'd in each note the feather'd choir,
If chance her Bird would ſing:

Vain were her hopes, vain all her pains;
Long time her muſic fail'd;
When thus the Bird, in plaintive ſtrains,
His hapleſs fate bewail'd:

Muſt I then ſing, oh cruel Fair!
Thy tedious hours to waſte?
Muſt I then ſing, to ſooth thine ear,
And pleaſe thy pamper'd taſte?

No more ſhall blithſome woodland ſongs
In artleſs meaſure flow;
But let Neriſſa hear my wrongs
In notes attun'd to woe.

Perhaps, reflecting on my fate,
The Nymph ſhall hence diſdain,
To purchaſe pleaſures that create
Such ſcenes of endleſs pain.

Her ruthleſs hand I learn'd to fear
Full early in the day,
What time my Dam obſerv'd her near,
Directing where we lay.

Her wings expanded o'er the neſt,
Beſpoke ſome danger nigh;
She trembled, and her throbbing breaſt
Upheav'd with many a ſigh.

No more ſhe left her callow brood,
By this alarm detain'd;
Her faithful mate procur'd her food,
With ceaſeleſs labour gain'd;

How much in vain was all *his* toil,
How uſeleſs was *her* aid;
A thoughtleſs Boy could ſnatch the ſpoil
To pleaſe a cruel Maid.

Eager with joy the parent Bird
He ſeiz'd with haſty graſp;
Bruis'd in his hands (no groan was heard)
She drew the fatal gaſp.

Then carrying off his orphan prey,
Confin'd them to a cage:
The eldeſt of the brood that day
Fell by Grimalkin's rage.

Unnat'ral diet kill'd the reſt,
I, only I remain:
How did I deem thoſe creatures bleſt
So ſoon devoid of pain!

But when the Maid, with tender care,
Was pleas'd to ſee me feed;
Perch'd on the finger of the Fair,
I pluck'd the wholeſome feed.

From off her breaſt I often peck'd
The myrtle's fragrant bough;
Oft wanton cull'd the flow'rs that deck'd
The fair Neriſſa's brow.

Longer to wail my fate I ceas'd,
Nor thought of ſorrows paſt;
Nor ever wiſh'd to be releas'd,
Whilſt joys like theſe ſhould laſt.

I envied not the feather'd choir
The various charms of Spring,
Whilſt fair Neriſſa tun'd her lyre,
And lov'd to hear me ſing.

So ſweet a concert is not heard
In hill, or grove, or plain,
Tho' Philomela, ſweeteſt bird,
Thrill her pathetic ſtrain.

Alas! *She* ſorrows but one year,
And Spring renews her peace,
My hopeleſs fate no Spring ſhall chear;
My pains will never ceaſe.

T'improve my ſong, the thoughtleſs Fair
Depriv'd me of my eyes,
And to the blithſome woodland air
Preferr'd theſe plaintive cries.

Darkling

Darkling my tedious hours I waſte,
Nor change of ſeaſon know;
Variety ne'er whets my taſte,
Nor mitigates my woe:

Nature for me expands in vain
Her tints by fount or rill;
In vain her colours die the plain,
Her verdure clothes each hill:

Sweet is the fragrant breath of morn,
The Sun's firſt riſing gay;
And ſweet the evening's mild return
To cool the parching day:

Nor ſweet to me's the breath of morn,
Nor Sun's firſt riſing gay:
Alike to me is eve's return,
And Sirius' parching ray.

To me no object can be dear,
Excluded thus from light;
Nor Hope, that comes to all, can chear
Me, doom'd to endleſs night.

Wiſh'd

Wiſh'd for in vain---perhaps---yet Death
For me an age ſhall wait:
But no---I catch my fleeting breath,
And feel approaching fate.

Wish'd for in vain—perhaps—yet Death

For me an age shall wait:

But no—I catch my fleeting breath,

And feel approaching fate.

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